THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD,

IN

Nature, Inſtitution and Revelation,

AND

RELIGIOUS STATUTES

IN THE

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL.

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED

BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1777.

BY ANSELM BAYLY, LL. D.

SUBDEAN OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPELS-ROYAL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDLEY, ST. JAMES'S STREET;
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MDCCLXXVIII.

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MDCCLXXVII.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

FREDERICK Lord NORTH,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, AND CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

MY LORD,

THE two following Diſcourſes, which were drawn up, and preached before your Ancient, Learned, and Famous Univerſity, with an eye to the Times, are with all due Submiſſion and reſpect inſcribed to your Lordſhip by,

My Lord,

Your moſt obedient,

moſt humble

and devoted Servant,

ANSELM BAYLY.

PREFACE.

A Fond hope and over-weening perſuaſion, that the following diſcourſes may poſſibly be of ſervice in giving a check at leaſt to the growth and prevalence of certain opinions and tenets, dangerous to individuals and the community, advanced and maintained not only with ſly inſinuation in private, but openly and in print, have induced the Author to lay them before the public, under the patronage of confeſſedly a great and worthy man, a powerful ſpeaker, and an able ſtateſman; able, it is to be hoped, ſpeedily and happily to accompliſh the arduous work of quieting the feuds of diſſenſion, and of allaying the rage of ſedition:

——magno in populo cum ſæpe coorta eſt
Seditio, ſævitque animis ignobile vulgus,
Jamque faces et ſaxa volant, furor arma miniſtrat;
Tum pietate gravem ac meritis ſi forte virum quem
Conſpexere, ſilent arrectiſque auribus aſtant.

I might

I might introduce, not unaptly to the preſent occaſion, the Fourteenth Ode of Horace, in which, deſcribing the unhappineſs of the Roman ſtate at war with itſelf, under the ſimilitude of a ſhip in a ſtorm, with torn rigging, broken oars, and contending parties, he bids them unite inſtantly, and the ſhip ſtrenuouſly make for port, *fortiter occupa portum*; but, perhaps, nothing can be more appoſite than the beautiful compariſon which Plutarch draws in his Life of Phocion, between the conduct of a wiſe governor, and the courſe of the ſun. "The ſun, as aſtronomers tell us, in his motions is neither exactly parallel with the reſt of the orbs, nor yet directly and diametrically oppoſite to them, but deſcribing an oblique line with inſenſible declination, he in his annual revolution ſo ſteers his courſe as to diſpenſe his light and influence, at certain ſeaſons, in ſuch proportions as ſerve to the well-being of the whole creation; ſo ſhould be the movements of civil government. For if the ruler be partial to his own will, and conſtantly oppoſite to the genius and intereſt of the people, he will be conſidered as arbitrary and tyrannical; on the other ſide, ſhould he incline with too much de-

ference and indulgence to the ſubject's levity and licentiouſneſs, it might prove dangerous and fatal; while a gratification of them in reaſonable and fair requeſts, when they are not aſſuming and inſolent, will be the moſt likely means of preſerving his own honour and the ſafety of the people. It muſt be confeſſed, it is a nice management and of extreme difficulty ſo to temper lenity with power, as to preſerve the authority and dignity of government, that it may not be expoſed to the affront and contempt of the people; yet if ſuch a happy mixture and temperament can be preſerved, it ſeems of all other modes to be the moſt regular and harmonious. For thus, we are taught, God himſelf governs the world, not irreſiſtibly forcing, but by perſuaſive arguments and gentle excitements bending, our mind to a compliance with his gracious and eternal purpoſes."

May he, who ſits as pilot, not quit the helm till long after he has brought the ſhip ſafe into port; and may he, who is the luminary and ruler, long live to direct its courſe.

SERMON I.

PSALM cxix. 48.

My hands alſo will I liſt up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy ſtatutes.

THIS 119th Pſalm might not unfitly be entitled, A Panegyric or Eulogy on the Law of Moſes; in which David, impreſſed with the deepeſt ſenſe of duty, maketh by turns profeſſions of love to God's word, and reſolutions to obey it, expreſſed by the internal and external motions of the heart, taſte, lips, eyes, feet, and hands; as when he ſays, "With my whole heart have I ſought thee---thy word have I hid within my heart---how ſweet are thy words unto my taſte, yea ſweeter than honey unto my mouth ---with my lips have I declared the judgments of thy mouth---I have an eye to all

thy commandments---I turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies---I will run the way of thy commandments;" and in the text, "my hands alſo will I lift up unto thy commandments."

The words of the text may be conſidered as containing or ſetting forth David's profeſſion, proteſtation, or declaration of what he had done; "I have loved thy commandments;" and his reſolution, readineſs, or determination of what he would do, "I will lift up my hands unto thy commandments, and meditate in thy ſtatutes."

Though the word ſtatute ſeems oftentimes to be uſed as ſynonymous with commandment, yet hath it a diſtinct meaning. By commandments, or commands, are evidently meant certain things required by God to be done and practiſed; all moral, ſocial, and religious duties. By ſtatutes, we may underſtand certain preſcribed ſtated rules reſpecting religious worſhip and divine faith. The word ſtatute is thus applied in Exodus, ch. xxix. to comprehend the ceremonies of conſecrating the prieſts: "The prieſts office ſhall be theirs (Aaron and his ſons) for a perpetual ſtatute;" and in Num. ix. 3. the rites of the paſſover.

I have

I have loved thy commandments.

The love of God and the love of his commandments are ſo cloſely connected, that the latter preſuppoſeth and followeth the former, as cauſe and effect. After God himſelf, that is next to be loved, which hath moſt of God, that in which is the livelieſt and ſtrongeſt impreſſion of him. Now, though there be nothing in the world which hath not ſomething, ſome marks of God in it, whoſe wiſdom, power, and goodneſs being to be ſeen in the loweſt of his works, and eſpecially in that ſuperior work, Man, called the image and likeneſs of God, yet in nothing is there ſo lively an impreſſion of God as in the word of God; herein is more than the image and ſimilitude of God; in it ſtand forth to our view all the divine attributes, the mouth, finger, wiſdom, yea the very ſpirit, mind, and will of God; eſpecially in Jeſus Chriſt, emphatically ſtiled, "The word and the expreſs image of his perſon, in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily." After the love of God himſelf, therefore, the next and greateſt love muſt be fixed upon his commandments, which

lead us not only to the knowledge, but to the very fruition of God; and the greateſt teſtimony, the moſt ſure manifeſtation of our love to God is ſhewn by a love of his commandments in obſerving and obeying them, as ſaith our Lord and his beloved diſciple St. John, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

David ſaith to God, "Thy word hath quickened me," and prayeth, "quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word;" which proves him to have had a true notion of God's word, by ſome certain knowledge and experience to be convinced, that in it is ſomething alive, a vivifying power, which caſt into the heart of man, like a grain of corn, whoſe ſeed is in itſelf, into the earth, growing and ſpringing up, bringeth forth fruit abundantly. In alluſion to the vegetation of corn, or rather perhaps of the vine, which is remarkably prolific, Chriſt tells us, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit; ſo ſhall ye by my diſciples."

David,

David, in this expreſſion *quicken*, meant alſo, that the word of God, by its indwelling, quickening power, not only makes alive and carrieth us forth to action, but likewiſe cauſeth us to abound internally and ſecretly with conſolation, and ſtrength, and joy, in full aſſurance. Hence, in another place, he ſaith, "Thy word hath comforted me; this is my comfort in my affliction, and, in God's word will I rejoice." St. Paul ſpeaks in the ſame ſtrain, when he tells the Hebrews, "The word of God is quick and powerful."

Thus we ſee God dwelleth in his word; it exhibits to us the very perſon of God, and lives in all who believe, who ſearch for him in the ſpirit as well as in the letter, and love his commandments; they feel its operations, and know by experience its power, light, and efficacy. We may be deceived by the movement and impulſe of the paſſions and affections, but not by the convictions of the underſtanding, reaſon, and conſcience. When David therefore in the text declareth to God with confidence and aſſurance, when he affirmeth without any fear, heſitation, and reſerve, "I have loved thy commandments,"

ments," we are not to conſider this affirmation as boaſting, arrogant, and preſumptuous; much leſs are we to imagine that David by it meant to juſtify himſelf before God, or thought to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs; but we ought rather to conſider it as a holy ejaculation ſent up to God, a modeſt appeal and humble teſtification of his affections; juſt as when on another occaſion he breathed forth his ardent love in this manner, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee;" or as when in anſwer to Chriſt's queſtion, "Simon loveſt thou me?" Peter with confidence made his appeal, "Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee." In like manner Hezekiah, in holy devotion, and with the pure teſtimony of his conſcience, expreſſed his obedience to God, "Remember, Lord, how I have ſerved thee with a perfect heart." We are by an Apoſtle authoriſed to make this appeal, "Brethren, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." What need I refer to St. Paul, who continually appeals to his conſcience and practice, and

places

places his ſecurity on this evident, never-failing baſis? And indeed, notwithſtanding ever ſo much boaſting of faith, confidence in election, and warmth of the paſſions, till we can thus aſſure our hearts before God, till our conſcience teſtifies that we have loved and kept his commandments, or daily endeavour in ſincerity and truth to keep them, our boaſting will be vain talking, our paſſions the blaſt of wind, and our confidence ſaucy preſumption.

Seeing then that God dwelleth in his word, that it is the moſt exact outward repreſentation of himſelf to our ſenſes, underſtanding, and feelings, to believe, hope, and truſt in the word of God, to love and obey it, is believing, hoping, truſting, loving, and obeying God himſelf; and to diſbelieve the word of God, is diſbelieving, diſobeying, and rejecting God himſelf: in fact and reality this makes us Atheiſts. The written, expreſs commandments are the only ſtandard of duty; that by which muſt be tried our thoughts, words, and actions here and hereafter. We may deceive ourſelves, if we judge only by ourſelves, by nature, by feelings, or internal

evidence;

evidence; let us bring these feelings, this internal evidence, and what is better, our whole conduct to the touchstone of God's written word, and then we never can be deceived: this is the only infallible rule.

Our first parents erred by not adhering strictly to this rule, to the commandment, "Thou shalt not eat of it." It was from this the Scribes and Pharisees made void the word of God, by their misinterpretations and traditions, who were therefore driven out of the vineyard; and it is by this that the church of Rome, originally a sound church, purely ecclesiastical, and not of this world, contracted errors, and notwithstanding all the warnings given in scripture, or the examples by protestants, continues in them unreformed even to this time, and for which she also shall perish, when (as St. John, Rev. xviii. 8. pronounces) "Her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire:" The corrupt Jewish church is plainly to be seen in the corrupt church of Rome.

As sin is the transgression of the law, so is righteousness the observance and fulfilling

of

of the law. This doctrine is ſtrongly inculcated by the Pſalmiſt in this whole 119th pſalm, by Moſes, by all the Prophets, by Chriſt, and by all the Apoſtles; remarkably by Chriſt, when he ſays, "By their fruits, ye ſhall know them;" and by St. John, 1 Eph. iii. 7. where to put all pretences to ſilence, and to preſerve his diſciples from the traditions and doctrines of men, he cautions them with this ſure proof, "Brethren, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous." Obſerve the expreſſion here, even as *he*, that is, God, or rather God in Chriſt; for *he* in this verſe, as alſo in verſes 6, 5, 3, and 2, muſt refer to the antecedent God the Father in verſe the firſt, where it is ſaid, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God." Here then we have ſure proof, from a poſitive aſſertion, of Chriſt's divinity and our own righteouſneſs; he that doeth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous. To have ſettled comfort and aſſurance therefore, we muſt be able to appeal unto God, "I have loved thy commandments."

Now the commandments of God may be conſidered as threefold; thoſe of nature, thoſe of human inſtitution, and thoſe of divine, written revelation.

1ſt. There are certain relations in nature, a fitneſs, propriety, and good in things themſelves, that require our attention, demand our obſervance, and attract our love, ſuch as ſelf-preſervation, active in avoiding every thing injurious to life, and in ſeeking every thing beneficial to it; this is the firſt and greateſt natural good, even the ſtandard by which to try good and evil itſelf: it is ſelf-preſervation or a concern for our well-being, which conſtitutes virtue and happineſs, as its neglect, or contrariety of action doeth vice and miſery. A ſecond natural good is a concern for others, the mutual love between huſband and wife, parents and children, relations, friends, neighbours, citizens, countrymen, in ſhort the whole human ſpecies; which love is manifeſted not only negatively by doing no one any injury, but alſo poſitively by ſhewing benevolence, that is, good will or good nature, in acts of civility, moderation, kindneſs, and mercy, under the guidance and guardianſhip of prudence and juſtice.

juſtice. Theſe are called moral or ſocial duties, which began with the firſt man and the firſt human pair, and are the real, evident, and durable commands of nature, evident and common to all mankind, prior to any human inſtitution and written revelation, which ſerve only more exactly to aſcertain and enforce them by expreſs rules and penal laws. And there is ſuch a fitneſs, propriety, beauty, and good in theſe duties, that they may well be ſtiled the commands of God, and though they may be neglected, as every thing may, by the careleſs, yet can they not fail powerfully to engage the attention, and attract the love of every thinking, inquiſitive, contemplative, good man, even for their own ſake and intrinſic value: ſo teach all the Greek philoſophers; ſo ſays the great Roman moraliſt in his offices, and the inſpired apoſtle Paul, when he bids the Philippians, "Whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things:" to the ſame purpoſe he ſays to Timothy, "The law is not made for a righteous man, (who doeth his duty ſpontaneouſly, and wants no ſuch enforcement to do it) but

for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manſlayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for liars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any thing contrary to ſound doctrine." And again he tells the Galatians, "the law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion," that is, the law was enacted by reaſon of the idolatry, with all its evil attendants of injuſtice and wickedneſs, which had prevailed among other nations, and now, at the time of giving the law, began to infect the Iſraelites themſelves, under the influence of the mixed multitude, which came up with them out of Egypt.

The law, it is ſaid, was added; which implies, that ſome thing, or ſome ſtate, exiſted before legiſlation or preſcription of the law. What was this ſtate, here referred to by the apoſtle? Doubtleſs the patriarchal ſtate, which ſome would conſider as a ſtate of nature; but it might rather be called the ſtate of tradition, or oral revelation of precepts, both moral and religious, delivered primarily from

God himſelf to the firſt man, and ſecondarily from father to ſon, through a long ſeries of years before and after the flood; thus revelation was once univerſal; and when this ſtate was like to be forgotten, and totally effaced not only by omiſſions, but by actual tranſgreſſions of moral duties and religious precepts, then was the law added or ſuperinduced, not to abrogate or annul the prior ſtate, but to renew and explain its precepts rules and cuſtoms, or as God himſelf calls them in Gen. xxvi. 5. "My commandments, my ſtatutes, and my laws," more largely and preciſely, and to ratify them in writing, with the ſanctions of immediate rewards and puniſhments.

The commands of nature then are juſt, and prior to any human inſtitutions and written revelation, which might never have been given (Jer. vii. 22. Ezek. xx. 25.) had not ſin and tranſgreſſion introduced them. Hence then,

Secondly, To prevent and repreſs injuries, to ſecure the property and peace of ſociety, nay even to ſupply its neceſſities, and enforce the practice of natural duties, was called in the

the aſſiſtance of human laws and civil government; which indeed are a bridle in the mouth of villainy and licentiouſneſs, but the praiſe, the glory, the defence, the ſpur of juſtice, righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and liberty: "Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame."

In all human inſtitutions and civil cuſtoms of ſociety there are three peculiarities, which deſerve our notice, their mutability, ſeverity, and inefficacy.

Difference of climate and change of circumſtances introduce a difference of right and wrong, and that not only civil but moral, and even a change in laws themſelves. The modes of living, of dreſs, and of manners, are often ſo various, that what is thought right in one nation and age, ſhall be deemed wrong in another: faſhion is whimſical and ungovernable. This however, as a thing in itſelf indifferent, may be borne with, ſo long as it exceed not the bounds of right; for ſometimes, and in ſome places, real vices are faſhionable.

Neither

Neither are human laws themſelves immutable in the ſame country. A law, which at one time may be neceſſary and convenient, at another, or upon reconſideration, may require amendment, and even abrogation: as men are not perfect, ſo neither are their productions.

Human laws alſo oftentimes appear too rigid, puniſhment being not always proportioned to the crime; as when death is inflicted for the deprivation of property, the ſame as of life itſelf. Perhaps the moſt equitable law is that of retaliation, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, ox for ox, life for life, I mean in the hands of the magiſtrate, not of private revenge; though even this may be thought too ſevere, eſpecially when, in order to make reſtitution and do juſtice to the ſufferer, it enjoins not only the thief himſelf, if he be unable to pay, but likewiſe his wife and children, to be ſold, that payment may be made. Againſt revolters from God is held up the ſevere threat, "Viſiting the ſins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" which is, however graciouſly and abundantly

over-

overbalanced by the oppoſite encouragement, "Shewing mercy unto thouſands in them that love me, and keep my commandments," and ſo is attainder againſt rebellious ſubjects.

After all, one comfort is, that neither the mutability nor the ſeverity of laws, which are frequent in ſociety, and in commercial countries perhaps expedient, can affect the righteous man, but only rogues and villains, the raſcally and baſe, who incur their cenſure and puniſhment by leaping over fences and breaking down barriers. Tyranny, anarchy, and confuſion may indeed hurt even the juſt, the righteous, the good, and that too perhaps ſooner and more than the wicked, yet never can the ſevereſt laws of ſound policy, under a juſt and well regulated adminiſtration. Be it therefore, that human laws may ſome of them be even cruel; yet no matter, ſo long as they are a terror only to evil doers, who impatient of all reſtraint are clamorous againſt them, as if they were an infringement of natural freedom, and labour either by force or cunning to throw the reins of liberty looſe upon the neck of licentiouſneſs.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, Human laws, though ever ſo well contrived, and ever ſo ſeverely executed, are feeble; they command not deeper than the ſurface, are unable to reach the heart and conſcience; which, under all their influence, may ſtill remain low and baſe, unconverted, and ſecretly evil. Human laws are moſtly prohibitory, reſtraining the outward man from committing evil, without any obligation upon the inner to do good.

Thus then the commands of nature and human inſtitution, though virtually the commands of God, and good ſo far as they go, yet in them both are many defects and much weakneſs, ſuch as can be rectified only by a written, ſtanding revelation from God himſelf.

God indeed never left himſelf without witneſs; he did not leave the firſt man, the maſter-piece of his work, to find out truth by the tedious labour of long inveſtigation and experience, but ſhewed him what was good, and what would be evil, immediately, both in his ſtate of innocence, and in that of a lapſe, by verbal directions, oral promiſes, and external exhibitions, and afterwards re-

corded the ſame, for the uſe of his poſterity, in expreſs and ample revelation.

From this revelation the principal and moſt intereſting things we learn, which we could not with certainty and ſatisfaction know from nature, are, that man was originally in a ſtate of innocence, how he fell, and how he is to be recovered from corruption and miſery into a ſtate of purity and happineſs.

Indeed, admitting the exiſtence of an all-wiſe, intelligent, powerful, juſt, and good Being, (and ſuch a Being muſt be admitted from a bare inſpection of things themſelves) reaſon eaſily apprehends, that his works, as they came originally out of his hands, muſt be perfect, good, and complete, yet not abſolutely ſo, which nothing can be, except the Creator himſelf, but perfect as creatures can be, that is, free from error and evil, though not from the poſſibility of error; and when, upon examination and experience, reaſon perceives in man not only error, but ſin, nay groſs tranſgreſſion, ſickneſs, and death, it can eaſily apprehend alſo, that this imperfection could not poſſibly ariſe from the Creator, but from ſome accidental miſtake

or wilful act in the creature; yet when reflection and repentance would ſeek and hope for pardon and recovery from this ſtate of corruption through the mercy of the Creator, it is diſcouraged, and thrown back again into heſitation and doubt, by a contemplation on his righteouſneſs and juſtice. Thus far God ſeems not to have left himſelf without witneſs, even to natural ſenſations and unaſſiſted reaſon; but thus far there being no knowledge concerning the origin of evil, except in the firſt man, and no aſſurance of pardon and recovery even to him, and no real relief of his doubt and perplexity, a promiſe, diſcovery, or revelation of mercy, with a reconciliation of juſtice, was abſolutely neceſſary for the firſt offenders, to be given them immediately from the mouth and word of God himſelf, and afterwards to their poſterity in writing.

Here then is ſeen plainly the expedience and neceſſity of divine revelation both oral and written, as well as its principal and moſt intereſting informations; which informations are ſo agreeable and ſatisfactory to human feelings, wiſhes, and apprehenſions, that

man, though he could not of himſelf diſcover them, yet when diſcovered and fairly propoſed, is ready to receive them with humility, thankfulneſs, and comfort.

And now, even in this ſhort draught and contracted view of things, can we help admiring, loving, and obeying the commandments of God exhibited in nature, inſtitution, and revelation? This threefold cord, which, if kept together, can never be broken, may yet be weakened by diſunion; as when ſome pulling away the twines of nature and inſtitution, would make revelation ſtand alone; or when ſome on the contrary ſay, nature is ſufficient of herſelf, without any aſſiſtance from revelation and inſtitution; or laſtly, when others are for making all to depend on the will of the prince.

Theſe laſt, if not the ſecond, however they may be friends to adulation and ſelf-intereſt, are certainly enemies to nature, revelation, and liberty, both civil and religious; nay hiſtory teſtifies that in the end they are even enemies to the man they flatter, and to themſelves.

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In arbitrary government, to every obſervant beholder it will be evident, that deſpotiſm and tyranny deſcend gradually from the prince, who ſtandeth on the firſt round of the ſcale, to the peaſant on the loweſt, every ſuperior commanding the next inferior, not with equity and mildneſs, but with abſoluteneſs and violence; ſo that each is a ſlave to each, and the whole to one.

This therefore, among imperfect men, is ſuch a ſtate as is ſcarcely to be endured; it is a conſtitution worked by too hard labour, whereby it is very liable to be broken; nor more eaſily can be borne that government, wherein the many are commanded by the few; but we have been taught by lamentable experience, that with ſtill leſs ſufferance can be endured the oppoſite ſtate, a popular command, wherein each would be equal, acting uncontrollably, or as ſome contend for, "with natural freedom:" this is fancy and imagination; for though the people, that is, the majority, may be ſaid to have in them the power originally and ultimately, yet they know not what to do with it; they muſt either give it away graciouſly to the beſt, or

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it will be taken away forcibly or artfully by the worſt. Nature never was left to itſelf, and never can be in a multitude, without falling into licentiouſneſs, and licentiouſneſs into anarchy and confuſion. Hence it is plain, that this, properly ſpeaking, can be no government at all, but would be the ſubverſion of it, making a nation ſtand upon its head inſtead of the heels. That inſtitution therefore is undoubtedly the beſt, wherein the power is mixed, and wherein religion, both natural and revealed, ſupports the ſtate, and the ſtate ſupports religion, eſpecially revealed religion, becauſe of another ſuperior and very peculiar advantage the written word and commandments of God have over thoſe of nature and inſtitution, which is, that they reach the heart and conſcience.

The motives of acting for God's ſake, in pure love and obedience to his expreſs commands, are much more exalted and influencing than thoſe of nature and inſtitution, eſpecially when we act through faith in our gracious Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, and under the ſanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. We can eaſily be prevailed upon by the warm

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ſuggeſtions of ſelf-intereſt, or thoſe of the paſſions and appetites, to quell the cool dictates of reaſon, and to evade the laws of man, or even dare to break them, but not the authority and preſence of God in his word: this will conſtrain us by fear, or, which is much better, engage us by love, to do what is right and good in private as well as in public, and in all things, ſmall as well as great. "I have an eye," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, and every true, ſincere believer, "to all thy commandments." "He that is born of God," ſaith St. John, "ſinneth not;" that is, wilfully, deliberately, knowingly, and with continuance, ſo much as in one point; and again, "He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as God is pure." The Chriſtian is preſſed forward by the prize of his high calling, and nothing ſhort of univerſal obedience will content him: he doth not labour from fear, as thoſe who ſlave under a hard taſk-maker; but he worketh by love, as one that taketh pleaſure in obeying a tender parent and gracious maſter, who worketh not only with him, but alſo in him; for God doth not exact our ſer-

vice, as the Scribes and Phariſees, lords and tyrants, who lay heavy burdens on men's ſhoulders, which they themſelves will not touch with one of their fingers. God's commandments are not grievous, as being natural, rational, and beneficial: Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, and his burden light even in itſelf, but much more ſo by his ſtrength being made perfect in our weakneſs.

Laſtly, To open a ſtill more extenſive view of another moſt diſtinguiſhed excellency in revelation, which is, that its laws are abſolutely perfect, ſo ſublime and complete, as by the unexperienced and vitious to be pronounced impracticable, and its doctrines incredible. Moral virtues are here refined and exalted into divine graces; and this is as it ought to be: for the rule of life, being formed by unerring wiſdom, ſhould be exact in itſelf, notwithſtanding it may be impoſſible for feeble man, and in a corrupt world, to ſquare his conduct by it with unſinning obedience. It is not proper that the rule ſhould deſcend to man, but that he ſhould bring himſelf to it, and walk as ſtrait as he can by the exact line of duty. For inſtance, "Be

perfect

perfect as your father is perfect---love your enemies---reſiſt not evil---avenge not yourſelves---be pure as God is pure---be ye holy, for I am holy---thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven---thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength, and thy neighbour as thyſelf." In theſe and many other paſſages of ſcripture is demanded from man a perfect and unſinning obedience, though he is unable to pay it.

In this caſe certainly all that can be expected of every man is to do his beſt, and not be idle, like the indolent, the affected, and the ſtubborn, who, becauſe they cannot do every thing as they ſhould, cry, "I can do nothing." Let us but wiſh and aim to do what is commanded, deſired, requeſted; let us in earneſt and ſincerity uſe our endeavours, and we ſhall by practice, habit, and the co-operating grace of God, ſecretly communicated to us, find ourſelves upon retroſpection to exceed our utmoſt belief and expectations. If, indeed, we were required, like the miſerable Iſraelites in Egypt, to make bricks without ſtraw, we might be heartleſs and hopeleſs; but when we are promiſed

aſſiſtance and acceptance, we may work with full aſſurance of ſucceſs. Hence it is ſaid, "If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature---that we are created again in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works." St. Paul prayed for the Epheſians, Ep. iii. 14, 19. that they might be filled with all the fulneſs of God; and for the Theſſalonians, 2 Theſſ. v. 23. that the very God of peace might ſanctify them wholly, that their whole ſpirit, ſoul, and body might be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

As man was originally innocent and upright, made in the image of God, ſo is it the purpoſe, the principal aim of divine revelation and divine grace, to renew in him that image, and reſtore him as much as poſſible, even in this life, to a ſtate of perfection and unſinning obedience.

Behold now the Chriſtian; how noble the motives, how manifold the obligations he is under from nature, inſtitution, revelation, and from the ſecret aſſiſtance afforded him by God himſelf, to be a good huſband, yielding wife, a tender parent, ſubmiſſive child, a civil and friendly neighbour, a kind maſter,

obedient

obedient ſervant, and peaceable ſubject, in ſhort, a juſt and virtuous man; not only ſo, but alſo a religious man, a worſhipper of God in private and public, thereby perfecting holineſs, as the Apoſtle ſaith, in the fear of God: in the fear of God, remember, not merely of nature and inſtitution. Upon this noble principle, St. Paul, Epheſ. vi. 5. exhorts ſervants to obey maſters, and maſters reciprocally to protect ſervants. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your maſters, according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart, with good-will doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doeth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye maſters, do the ſame thing by them, forbearing threatning, knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven; neither is there reſpect of perſons with him. Finally, my brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Every man, you ſee, muſt work the beſt he can by rule, by the law and the com-

mandment, which is abſolutely perfect and good, though no man can be juſtified by it, that is, though no man can become really perfect and ſinleſs by it in his own perſon, but acceptably or imputatively ſo only by faith in the perfect man Chriſt Jeſus, our mediator and advocate:

To whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all honour—

NOTES.

The word, and the expreſs image of his perſon, p. 3.] To illuſtrate great things by ſmall, may here be applied not unaptly the words of Cicero at the end of the 3d book *De Officiis*, where he tells his ſon Marcus, that in his writings he ſpeaks to him the ſame as in perſon, *his voluminibus ad te profecta vox mea eſt, et abſens loquar.*

Originally a ſound Church, p. 8.] It is evident, that a Church was eſtabliſhed at Rome ſo early as in the days of St. Paul, from his epiſtle to the Romans; in which epiſtle, ch. i. 7, 8. and ch. vi. 17. the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it under the amiable character of pure and holy in theſe words—"To all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be ſaints. Firſt, I thank my God through Jeſus Chriſt, for you all, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the world. Ye have

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obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." And it continued pure and holy till near the end of the ſecond century, when Victor Biſhop of Rome began to aſſume an unwarrantable, as well as uncharitable, power over the Aſiatic Churches, by excommunicating them for celebrating Eaſter the 14th day after the firſt new moon that followed the vernal equinox, on whatever day it fell, inſtead of on the Sunday. The Church of Rome continued to increaſe in ſuperſtitions, and in the error of claiming to itſelf a ſuperiority, up to the ſixth century; when very far gone in corruption, it became really and truly anti-chriſtian, in the opinion even of one of its own Biſhops, Gregory the Great, who refuſed the title of Oecumenical, affirming, that whoſoever ſhould thus call himſelf univerſal Biſhop, would be the fore-runner of Antichriſt, and inſtead of it ſtiled himſelf *Servus ſervorum Dei.* However his ſucceſſor, Boniface the Third, took to himſelf this title in the fullneſs of pride, exalting himſelf above his fellows.

It is remarkable, that at this time John, Biſhop of Conſtantinople, was the firſt that ſtiled himſelf Oecumenical, under the countenance of the Emperor Mauritius, and Boniface of Rome afterwards, under the favour of Phochas. Thus Rome under the Pope, and Conſtantinople under the Turk, are conjointly the Antichriſt. In the ſixth century commenced the power of the Church of Rome, and its principal errors, namely, indulgencies, purgatory, the maſs, tranſubſtantiation, the doctrine of merits, prayers in

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an unknown tongue; and from hence was the decay of knowledge and true piety, which gave place to ſuperſtition and the multitude of ceremonies. After this time by the Church was meant the Pope; in him every thing centered, the privileges of other Churches, and the prerogatives of ſovereigns: theſe innovations happily brought on the Reformation.

To try good and evil itſelf, p. 10.] On this is founded that complete and univerſal rule of morality, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf," or, "Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye alſo unto them;" and to put the rule properly in practice, it need only be aſked, "How doth ſelf operate? How do I love myſelf?" The anſwer is ready; firſt, negatively, ſo as not wilfully to do myſelf any harm; and ſecondly, poſitively, ſo as intentionally to do myſelf all reaſonable good; in like manner I ought to love my neighbour.

Deprivation of property, p. 15.] This, we are told, was firſt made capital in England about the year 924, by Edmund the Firſt; "who finding that pecuniary puniſhments were not ſufficient to deter robberies, ordered, that in gangs of thieves the oldeſt of them ſhould be condemned to the gallows. (Hiſt. of Eng. in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son, Vol. I. P. 48.)

It has been obſerved, (ib. P. 45.) "that penal laws are more mild and humane during the firſt ſtate and ſimplicity of a people than after refinement, when the more polite a nation becomes, the more numerous and ſevere are its laws." The reaſon of this is plain,

becauſe

becauſe the introduction of elegance by the arts, which give a poliſh to the manners and conveniences of life, teaches at the ſame time the arts of cunning, deception, and fraud.

Even cruel, p. 16.] If certain laws of civil government, made to prevent and puniſh really bad and immoral actions, are looked upon as too ſevere, what muſt we think of Church cenſures and perſecutions, which, contrary to the divine, expreſs commands of charity, mercy, forbearance, and brotherly kindneſs, nay, contrary to the plain dictates and calls of humanity and civility, would force conſcience, and take away reputation, property, and life itſelf, for a trifling, harmleſs opinion, or a mere unconformity to a ceremony? It makes a man of tender feelings, and truly a Chriſtian, ſhudder, when he reads of Chriſtians in the Eaſtern and Weſtern churches horribly hating and moſt cruelly perſecuting one another, ſo early as even in the ſecond century, each party by turns, juſt as they had it in their power, without intermiſſion, up to the time of the Reformation, and afterwards the Proteſtants themſelves in the Netherlands, France, and even in our own nation, famous for humanity, till the Revolution put an end to it; juſt as if Chriſt had delivered a precept inſtead of a prophecy, when he ſaid, "Think ye, that I am come to ſend peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather diviſion."

It is reading hiſtory ſacred and profane to a proper end, when it improves us in ſentiments, enlightens our underſtanding to diſcern the errors of early times, and forms our manners in avoiding them; but not ſo,

when

when the cruelties of heathen idolatry and Chriſtian ſuperſtition, or the variety of opinions, ſects, and hereſies, lead us to reject the uſe of true religion, becauſe of its abuſe in the falſe: this is to read without diſcernment, and with an evil heart of unbelief. The ſame kind of reaſoning ſhould induce us to reject the uſe of money, civil government, arts and ſciences; for all theſe excellencies have been, and are daily abuſed exceedingly. For the ſame reaſon too, all obſervation of the ſabbath, and of feſtivals, ought to be laid aſide; for on thoſe days, among the lower claſs of mankind, is more revelling and drunkenneſs, more chambering and wantonneſs, and among thoſe of ſuperior rank more pleaſuring and journeying, more ſitting down to eat and drink, and more riſing up to play, than on any other.

Becauſe the Church of Rome is abominable in ſome of its doctrines, and cruel in its diſcipline, ſhall I not be a believer in a Proteſtant Church, the pureſt in doctrine, and the mildeſt in diſcipline? Shall I leave the Chriſtian Church itſelf, which is ſound and rational, and turn infidel, become a deiſt, an atheiſt, hate it and every Churchman, becauſe a particular Church is unſound? Surely, to argue in this manner againſt the uſe of a thing, right and good in itſelf, from its abuſe, betrays the greateſt want of reaſon in thoſe, who pretend to be in full poſſeſſion of it, and ſhews they are imperceptibly ſlaves to prejudices, paſſions, and appetites, while they boaſt themſelves to be the only ſons of freedom and truth. And yet by this falſe reaſoning did the Epicureans of old fall into a

kind of atheiſm, *tantum religio ſuadere malorum*, (Luc. i. 102.) uſing the word *religio* in an abuſive ſenſe, for *ſuperſtition* and *idolatry*; and ſo do all modern unbelievers, whereby they deceive themſelves, reject revelation, and of courſe renounce their baptiſm, their Saviour, and his Church: and after this, what have they to depend upon with that certain hope and full aſſurance, which is neceſſary to ſupport the beſt Chriſtian under the evils of life, and enable him to quit it without regret, and with comfort? Have they a perfect, moral conduct to depend upon? And will any one unbeliever venture to plead it in juſtification of himſelf before God? If he can anſwer theſe queſtions to himſelf ſoberly, ſeriouſly, and confidently in the affirmative, then he can do more than ever yet did the moſt rational and moſt devout believer. If unbelievers can plead in honour and conſcience, that they lead better lives, and have more hope in their death, than the beſt believers, certainly the cauſe of Chriſtianity and the Church may fairly and ought to be given them, to gratify their humane and long wiſhed-for enjoyment of its ſpoils; but if, on the contrary, they cannot in juſtice and truth ſet up this claim, then ſurely all their ſubtilties of reaſoning and wit go for nothing; they ought on their ſide, as profeſſors of reaſon, honour, and morality, to give up the pleas of deiſm, and become friends to Chriſtianity, or at leaſt not be adverſaries of our Church, as reformed, and now by law eſtabliſhed. I hope I ſhall not be thought tedious and impertinent, if I puſh the argument a little further.

As every deiſt, by renouncing revelation, renounces Chriſtianity, he certainly, as he would be thought a man of honour and ſpirit, ſhould be under no obligations to it; he ought to be above receiving the privileges and benefits of Chriſtianity; he ſhould in particular refuſe Chriſtian burial, and not put the miniſter to the difficulty of calling him *brother*, and *hoping* that he may reſt in Chriſt. It is one of the objections which Preſbyterians urge againſt conformity to our liturgy, that the words, "in ſure and certain hope of the reſurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," ſhould be pronounced over profeſſed unbelievers and open adverſaries to Chriſtianity.

It is remarkable, that there have been of late years more inſtances of ſuicide than in former times; and doubtleſs the ſecret and prevalent cauſe thereof is the growth of infidelity. Indeed ſuicide is perfectly agreeable to the ſyſtem of unbelief; for if men's hopes extend not to another life, to be conſiſtent with themſelves, they ought certainly to make the moſt of this, and when they can no longer enjoy it, ſhould put an end to their lives, according to the Epicurean maxim,

Natus enim debet, quicunque eſt, velle manere
In vita, donec retinebit blanda voluptas.

LUCRET. 5. 178.

Such are the embarraſſments, inconſiſtencies, meanneſs, and horrid conſequences of deiſm, and every ſpecies of infidelity; which might put its warmeſt abettors to the bluſh, did they allow themſelves time but for a moment's ſerious reflection.

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Upon the neck of licentiouſneſs, p. 16.] The people, like the human paſſions, are excellent ſervants, and deſerve to be treated well, not be annihilated, as the paſſions by the Stoics, becauſe they are the worſt of maſters; with whom it is but a word and a blow, right or wrong, ——— *dic aut accipe calcem:*

——————— *Libertas pauperis hæc eſt.*

Juv. Sat. iii. 295, 9.

From ſome accidental miſtake or wilful act in the creature, p. 18, 19.] Lucretius reaſoning from falſe premiſes, a ſuppoſition that the world was originally the ſame as it is now, concluded properly enough that it could not be made, nor is governed by a divine, intelligent Being, "It is ſo faulty:"

Nequaquam nobis divinitus eſſe paratam
Naturam rerum, tanta ſtat prædita culpa.

Had he, on the contrary, only ſuppoſed that all things once were very good, and that a change for the worſe had ſome how or other been introduced, by a lapſe from original perfection, he would have reaſoned right from right premiſes, that notwithſtanding the faults and evils in the world, there are ſufficient remains of excellency to ſhew it was made and is governed by an intelligent Being; but had he been aware of what we are by revelation, that man fell from purity into corruption, and that God, in order to bring good out of evil, promiſed a Redeemer, with new heavens and a new earth, he would have ſeen with approbation and thankfulneſs, that every thing was created, and the whole is conducted by not only an all-powerful

and wiſe, but good and juſt Being; would moreover have conſidered this as a ſtate of probation, and waited patiently for a releaſe and renovation in a better life; "when, as the Apoſtle ſaith, Rom. viii. 21. "the creation itſelf ſhall be delivered from the bon-"dage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the "children of God."

Twines of nature and inſtitution, p. 20.] By admitting the commands of nature and inſtitution, in company with thoſe of revelation, and as handmaids to it, we ſhall have a ready and ſafe rule to judge and act by in many accidental caſes and minute circumſtances of life, nay even in important concerns of ſociety, both civil and religious, wherein revelation may not be explicit and determinate. For the ſcriptures delineating the great outlines of duty, founding them on the nobleſt principles of faith and love, and preſcribing what is right, and what is not right to be done, conciſely under general heads, and not being able to deſcend to particulars, without being ſo voluminous as that the world could not contain them, though certainly plain in the preceptive parts, ſufficient and the only ſure rule for ſalvation and good conduct, yet in many things relative to time and place, to peace and war, and even to the kind of government, leave mankind to the exerciſe of their reaſon and mutual agreement. Beſides, by reaſon of the very figurative and peculiar ſtyle in which revelation is delivered, and the ſubject matter being highly refined and ſpiritual, common opinion and private judgment is not ſufficient always to determine the ſenſe; great learning and much experience is required

to interpret many paſſages of ſcripture, or at leaſt to fix their meaning; and ſometimes it is even neceſſary, for this purpoſe, to have recourſe to many judgments of men in council. To this you will ſay, perhaps, every man has a natural right to interpret and think for himſelf, and that the many have no natural power to take away that right, nor are they infallible; be it ſo: but then every man muſt live by himſelf. For if in ſociety every man, as pride, intereſt or prejudice may inſtigate him, exerciſe his natural rights, the conſequence will be doubtful and dangerous diſputation, and thereby a multiplicity of diviſions and ſects; to avoid which, as much as poſſible, there ought to be ſome dernier reſort, in religious as well as civil diſputes; for this purpoſe the many have a deputed right, in both caſes, and are more likely to be infallible than any ſingle perſon, according to the proverb, "In the mul-" titude of councellors there is ſafety."

Mankind differing in the complexion of their mind as much as in the features of their face, naturally fall into particular opinions, have their private judgment, and ſome are ready to plead even conſcience; and though their opinions be falſe, their judgment wrong, and their conſcience erroneous, for want of learning and experience, yet it may be right for the wiſer part to bear with the weaker, ſo long as they have their conſcience to themſelves, (as the Apoſtle commands, "Haſt thou faith? have it to thyſelf before God:" Rom. xiv. 22.) and keep their judgment in private. For certainly individuals have no more right to force their opinions, judgment and conſcience upon the public,

public, than the public to deprive them of the liberty of thinking, or of propoſing their thoughts with modeſty and ſubmiſſion, remaining at the ſame time friendly and quiet members of ſociety. From private judgment, and its intruſion, aroſe all thoſe errors, ſchiſms and hereſies, which began to trouble the church even in the days of the Apoſtles; but which afterwards, with a multitude of new errors, ſpringing from the ſame fountain, private opinions and private judgment, gave occaſion to thoſe many perſecutions and ſo much bloodſhed in the eaſtern and weſtern churches.

END OF SERMON I.

SERMON II.

PSALM CXIX. ver. 48.

My hands alſo will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy ſtatutes.

OBSERVE here the comprehenſiveneſs and beauty of expreſſion: "I have loved thy commandments;" which ſuppoſeth ſome previous examination of their propriety. I have loved thy commandments----why? becauſe upon the moſt mature reflection and trial, I find, O God, that as thou thyſelf art wiſe, juſt and good, ſo are thy commandments. "My hands will I lift up unto thy commandments;" this is the reſult of experience and love, as if the Pſalmiſt had ſaid, "In conſequence of having found thy commandments

mandments agreeable to right reaſon, and of having loved them, I will lift up my hands unto them in admiration of them, to lay hold on them, to retain and keep them cloſe; moreover to truſt in them, and depend upon the promiſes of reward annexed to their obedience: but "I will meditate in thy ſtatutes," that is, I will ſtudy them in order to diſcover their ſecret and myſterious intent.

The commandments of God, the precepts and duties of life, exhibited diffuſely in nature, contractedly in inſtitution, and conciſely in revelation, becauſe they are plain, level to the capacity and memory of every man, conſtant, amiable and good, are the objects of our paſſions, affections and love; but the ſtatutes, ceremonies and ordinances, many events and hiſtories of the Old Teſtament, becauſe they are figurative and typical, are the objects of our meditation, underſtanding and reflection, nay even of the imagination and fancy.

The commandments are the nerves of true and practical religion, its bones and ſinews, nay, its very eſſence; while the forms and ceremonies are its fleſh only, its dreſs and grace-

gracefulneſs. Being and form are coeval, if not coeſſential; for though a particular form may not be neceſſary to a ſubſtance, yet ſome form is neceſſary, inſomuch, that to conceive or ſpeak of matter without form, is in ſome ſort to ſpeak of non-entity. Religion is a reality, a power that hath in it ſomething ſocial and relative, and therefore muſt be accompanied and exhibited with ſtatutes, forms and ceremonies; which, as it were, circumſcribe and incloſe it, ſo as not only to preſerve it from indecorom and fanaticiſm, but to give it viſibility, dignity and grace. In an individual and in private, religion may be quietiſm; a ſtill, ſmall voice, neither heard nor ſeen by any one but God. The Pſalmiſt was thus alone, before and with God only, when he ſaid, "I will meditate in thy ſtatutes;" and he was a perfect quietiſt, when he ſaid, "My ſoul waiteth ſtill upon God;" my ſoul דומיה is mute, dumb, ſilent, ſubmiſſive to God; is conformable to him with the whole will, in every thought, wiſh and deſire: but on the contrary he was active, a member of the community, and a worſhipper of God in public, when he ſays, "I will de-

clare thy name unto my brethren; in the midſt of the congregation will I praiſe thee." Jeſus ſpeaks of his church internally, as eſtabliſhed by faith in believers hearts, when he told Peter on his anſwer, "Thou art the Chriſt, the ſon of the living God," that upon this rock he would build his church; and in John vi. 54. "Whoſo eateth my fleſh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life;" but he ſpake of it externally, in its corporate capacity, when he commanded, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them---take, eat, this is my body:---and Matt. xviii. 17. "Tell it unto the church."

In the cloſet then godlineſs may have its power only; but in public, and for its government, it muſt have ſtatutes, that is, forms, places and times, rules and orders, miniſters and veſtments: indeed what theſe ſhall be, unleſs where God himſelf may pleaſe to direct, is matter of human choice and agreement. This however ſeems certain, that nothing will be proper that comes ſhort of, or exceeds the apoſtolical rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order," that the eyes and ears of men may be pleaſed, nay even

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the imagination and fancy, and God be worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs: ſo much in general and in theory of ſtatutes, and that religion cannot exiſt in ſociety without them.

When the Pſalmiſt ſays, "I will meditate in thy ſtatutes," he refers to thoſe which God himſelf was pleaſed in particular to preſcribe to the firſt man, and afterwards to the whole Iſraelitiſh nation in the law of Moſes.

How each of the Moſaic ſtatutes was figurative and typical, would be too long and laborious for me to ſay, or you to hear. I ſhall therefore preſent you with a few particulars only, and offer them humbly to your contemplation.

The internal ſignification of the Moſaic ſtatutes muſt, doubtleſs, have been a ſubject of the moſt exalted and refined meditation to the pious and wiſe men of old, and that it was ſo appears from the Pſalms, the books of the Prophets, and the writings of the Apoſtles; from whom we learn and ſee plainly, that the law is ſpiritual, and was intended to teach mental purity and heavenly things; in ſhort, a ſchoolmaſter to lead the Iſraelites and us to Chriſt. Moſes himſelf, Deut. x. 16. explains

the outward circumciſion to ſignify that of the heart, when he ſays, " circumciſe therefore the foreſkin of your hearts:" ſee Rom. ii. 29.

The tabernacle and its ſervice, which we are aſſured by St. Paul in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, was ſignificative of heavenly things, even this was ſhowy and awful; but how muſt the eye of every beholder be ſtruck with the magnificence of the temple, which took place of the tabernacle, as alſo with that of its worſhip! how muſt the ear be delighted with the ſweet ſound of voices and inſtruments, and the imagination pleaſed with the decorations and ornaments! We are told, that the great and mighty warrior, Alexander himſelf, was awed at the ſight of the High Prieſt approaching him, bedecked with the majeſty of God in the diadem, and the whole world in the long garment: Wiſd. xviii. 24. To ſuch complex grandeur grew up by degrees the pomp of worſhip in the temple; whereas in the firſt ages, the commandments themſelves, as well as ſtatutes, were ſimple and few.

The firſt and only commandment was prohibitory. It is not ſaid to the firſt man, " Thou

"Thou ſhalt love, adore and praiſe thy creator," which, we may apprehend, he would naturally do, while perfect; but the command is negative, "Thou ſhalt not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midſt of the garden." The trial is harder, which requires implicitly to believe and refrain, than that which poſitively bids to do; becauſe the reaſon of a prohibition may lie deeper, more ſecreted from the eye of the intellect than that of a plain duty; and there is a reſtleſs curioſity in human nature to find out the ſecret even by tranſgreſſion, eſpecially when ſome tempter is preſent to provoke the curioſity, by repreſenting to the imagination that the reſtriction is arbitrary, and that the fruit, inſtead of being deadly, is good for food, ſalutary to the eyes, and deſirable for the improvement of knowledge.

The only ſtatute we read of during the ſtate of innocence, was the appointment of the ſabbath, a memorial firſt of the natural creation, afterwards of the Egyptian deliverance, and now of our ſpiritual creation and redemption by Chriſt Jeſus: this therefore is a perpetual ſtatute, an ordinance to be obſerved

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throughout our generations for ever. In the ſtate of innocence fruits ſerved for food, and the ſpreading trees for ſhelter and for temples.

Under this alluſion the author of Ecclus. xiv. 27. beautifully deſcribes wiſdom or religion: "By her man ſhall be covered from heat, and in her glory (that is, the iſſuing out of the branches from the trunk, like rays of light from the ſun) ſhall he dwell."

It ſeems to be a maxim of juſtice, even in nature, that life ſhould be for life, and that without ſhedding of blood can be no remiſſion. Hence, immediately after the fall, (that is, a lapſe from innocence into tranſgreſſion and guilt, and thereby the forfeiture of life) upon the merciful promiſe of a Redeemer, was inſtituted ſacrifice, that is, ſhedding religiouſly the blood of a lamb, or of ſome ſuch other harmleſs animal, as a preſent ſubſtitute for the life of guilty man, and as a figure, for the time then being, of him who was to come and to offer himſelf up a ſacrifice for the ſins of the whole world. This is the ſimple account of a very ſimple ſtatute in its original inſtitution, to be collected from the

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ſhort narration in the third and fourth chapters of Geneſis.

The reaſon of Moſes being ſo conciſe in his narration in Geneſis on the ſubject of ſacrifice, merely telling us, that Cain brought an offering of fruits only, and was therefore rejected, but that Abel brought a firſtling of his flock, and was accepted, that Noah, Abraham, and others ſacrificed, ſeems to be, that the forms of worſhip themſelves were very few and ſimple in the patriarchal age, and that he might not be guilty of repetition (a very great fault committed continually by profane hiſtorians) in the formal and preciſe recital of theſe, with additional inſtitutions by God's ſpecial appointment, which he was to give in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. The account was certainly full enough for the then generation of men, who knew every thing by practice and tradition, though it appears ſo ſhort and ſcanty to us, who are left to infer, which indeed we may fairly and ſafely do, that ſacrifice was of God's appointment, from facts in the early practice of it among all nations, and from the impoſſibility of its being a dictate of nature. There can be no doubt but that

Adam

Adam offered ſacrifice immediately after the pardon and promiſe that was given him, and that he covered himſelf with the ſkins of the animals he ſacrificed, religiouſly and emblematically, from what is ſaid, "Unto Adam alſo and his wife the Lord God made coats of ſkins and clothed them," that is, (as we who have ſeen the accompliſhments of the types, have a right to interpret theſe figurative expreſſions) God appointed and directed Adam to offer, in ſacrifice, the life of an innocent animal for their own lives forfeited, and to cover themſelves with the ſkin, throw it over them perhaps as a mantle or cloak, in token of that life and righteouſneſs which they then virtually received from the promiſed ſeed, who ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head. It is a common practice in ſcripture to aſcribe a thing to God, as the primary, efficient cauſe, which is done by his direction, or by ſecondary cauſes; thus God is ſaid to ſend rain, ſnow, wind, vapours, and to perform all the other operations of nature, though they are the immediate effects of material cauſes, conſtituted indeed originally by God. In the ſame ſtile of ſpeaking God is ſaid to make

make coats of ſkins and clothe the firſt human pair, that is, he directed and appointed theſe things for holy and devout purpoſes. To apprehend that God did really and literally make ſkins into coats, is a ſenſe groſs and inſufferable, and to ſay, that Adam and his ſons ſlew animals and offered them up to God from imagination and a dictate of nature, is ſaying, they and all the world did that, which it was very irrational, inhuman an unnatural to do. Nothing but the abſolute will and appointment of God with a myſterious, typical view can poſſibly account for this univerſal practice, which prevailed among the ſons of Adam in the idolatrous lines of Cain, Ham and Japhet, as well as in the holy lines of Sheth and Shem, down to the very advent of the promiſed ſeed in the perſon and ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, and then ſuddenly and ſurpriſingly died with him over all the known world. I have ſingled out this one ſtatute, and dwelt the more upon its origin and deſign, becauſe it is the plaineſt, even the maſter-ſpring in the Moſaick ſyſtem; and if we attend to this principal movement with an unprejudiced eye, we ſhall be enabled by it eaſily to ſee all the ſecondary and ſuc-

ceſſive movements, not only in the various offerings, but alſo in the waſhings, food, and purifications, as likewiſe in the eminent events, tranſactions and characters of the whole Old Teſtament. For it is an abſurdity in the firſt inſtance to look upon this as a common hiſtory, and expect to find in it a ſet of amuſing, earthly, unintereſting narrations. The Pſalmiſt had quite other ſentiments of theſe things when he ſaid, " Thy ſtatutes are wonderful; therefore doth my ſoul keep them—open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous things of thy law." If there was nothing more to ſee in the law of Moſes than the mere letter, David might have ſeen this without meditation and the extraordinary aid of divine illumination. He in this caſe had no reaſon to ſay, " thy ſtatutes are wonderful", any more than thoſe of the heathen, and to pray, " open thou mine eyes to ſee the wondrous things of thy law."

I wiſh I could now introduce you within the ſecond vail, into the Holy of Holies, and diſplay its ſacred apparatus of the Ark or holy cheſt, concealing the two tables of the covenant under its golden cover, called the mercy ſeat, and the two

cherubims

cherubims alſo of gold, or as St. Paul in Heb. ix. 5. ſtiles them "The Cherubims of glory"; ſtanding upon it, one at one end and the other at the other end; laſtly, of the High Prieſt entering this moſt ſacred apartment once a year with the blood firſt of a bullock, which he offered for his own ſins, and afterwards of a goat, which he offered for the errors of the people, ſprinkling the blood before and upon the mercy ſeat with his finger ſeven times.

Theſe are the ſtatutes, on which David ſaid he would meditate; theſe the ſhadow of good things to come, through which he was enabled to have a foreſight and foretaſte of the ſubſtance, even the promiſed Meſſiah and his bleſſings under the goſpel diſpenſation, the ſame as Abraham had before him, of whom Chriſt himſelf ſays, "Abraham ſaw my day, and was glad," and others, "to whom, as the Apoſtle affirms, the goſpel was preached as well as unto us". Let me now take off your eyes from the ſtatutes ſubſiſting in the Jewiſh Church, and fix them for a moment on thoſe in the Chriſtian.

The word Church does not occur in the Old Teſtament. There is ſomething very

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ſingular in the conduct of our tranſlators, who ſeem, (for what reaſon it is hard to conceive) induſtriouſly to have avoided this word in the Old Teſtament, always expreſſing the Hebrew words עדה and קהל either by congregation or aſſembly, otherwiſe they muſt have made uſe of the word Church, being ſtrongly invited to do ſo by the LXX. who often render קהל by εκκλησια remarkably in Deut. xxiii. 1. where ſome perſons are excepted on account of certain defects, from entering into εκκλησιαν the Church of the Lord. St. Stephen, Acts. vii. 38. ſpeaks of this Church, and ſays, that Moſes was in it in the wilderneſs. The LXX. generally render the words עדה and קהל by συναγωγη, but the New Teſtament writers conſtantly employ the word εκκλησια, and our tranſlators as conſtantly render that by the word Church; which in the Engliſh language is an appropriated term, much more ſo than congregation and aſſembly. This word, derived from the Greek κυριακη, may be defined to ſignify primarily and literally a ſelect body of men believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as its head, aſſuming his name, obeying his commandments and uſing his ſtatutes, eſpecially thoſe

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two, called the Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper; ſecondarily and figuratively, the place where they are gathered together for the ſake of publick worſhip, under the miniſtration and direction firſt of Apoſtles, and afterwards of Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons. That this comprehenſive ſenſe of the word Church is the true ſenſe, may appear evident to every one from the ſingle obſervation of this its uſe ever ſince the reception of Chriſtianity in this iſland, that is, more than thirteen hundred years, without any material change. Ever ſince that time this Church hath been protected by the laws of this country, and is ſo interwoven with the ſtate itſelf, (which indeed neceſſarily happens in every ſtate become chriſtian) as to make a part of our moſt excellent conſtitution; ſo intimate is the union, ſo cloſe the connexion, that the breaking up of this one part of the conſtitution would be as unlawful as the other, and therefore the ſupport of each other is reciprocal, I mean only, as now by law eſtabliſhed. Well then, if this be the caſe, how vain are all the arguments againſt our reformed church of the Papiſts; how futile the cavils of the

ſeparatiſt,

ſeparatiſt, and how abſurd the daily ſneers, the ſportings and ſtrivings of infidels! For even ſuppoſing, that the Church under its preſent form of epiſcopacy could not be proved exactly in every reſpect to be of divine inſtitution, or that even not ſo much as a trace of it can be found to ſubſiſt either in the apoſtolical or primitive ages, yet muſt it be allowed to have pretences to it, as good, if not better, than preſbytery, and to ſtand on a firm baſis, if it be only of human choice and appointment, as firm a baſis as that of the ſtate itſelf: but if it can be ſhewn, in addition to civil appointment, that even ſome parts only of our Church is built on the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone, then ſurely all gainſaying ought to ceaſe in admiration, reſpect and love; and to prove that it is ſo built, we need only attend a little to the meaning of the Greek word εκκλησια, conſtantly in the New Teſtament rendered Church, excepting once in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, where, becauſe uſed merely in a claſſical, heatheniſh ſenſe, to expreſs a ſudden and unlawful concourſe of people, it is very properly rendered

rendered aſſembly: " the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." For this reaſon the town-clerk calls it an uproar, and tells the makers of it, that they are liable to be called to an account for it, and that if there were any matters of real complaint, they ſhould be determined in a lawful aſſembly.

The Apoſtles, when they ſpeak of a merely Jewiſh Aſſembly, always uſe συναγωγη, and never εκκλησια; thus St. John in the ſecond chapter of the Revelations ii, 9, to diſtinguiſh between the true Church and falſe, ſtyles the former εκκλησια, and the latter συναγωγη, the ſynagogue of Satan.

From what has been obſerved it plainly appears, that the word εκκλησια ſignifies an aſſembly of men called forth, primarily and properly under ſome head or *rightful* authority, not of *their own* appointment, for the diſcharge of ſome important buſineſs either civil or religious.

The firſt mention made of the Church actually exiſting is in Acts ii. 47. " And the Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved", rather, ſuch as would, or were

were diſpoſed to be ſaved, namely, by embracing the Goſpel. This was an aſſembly of men, called Apoſtles, that is, men ſent forth, commiſſioned and authoriſed by Jeſus Chriſt, to preach the Goſpel, that is, good tidings of pardon and peace to mankind. Theſe men had alſo power, and their ſucceſſors, to ſend forth others to propagate the ſame Goſpel, and to eſtabliſh it in various parts of the then known and habitable world.

Together with the Apoſtles were aſſembled certain diſciples, and ſuch others as had believed in Jeſus Chriſt before his crucifixion, and had been baptized for the remiſſion of ſins; to which, by St. Peter's preaching, were added in one day near three thouſand ſouls: who alſo were received into the Church by baptiſm, and continued ſteadfaſt in the Apoſtles doctrine, and in breaking of bread, (that is, receiving the Lord's Supper) and in prayer. This was the firſt Church, its firſt ſtatutes, forms and ceremonies; and its ſeat was at Jeruſalem.

The Apoſtles afterwards, each in ſeveral cities and towns of Aſia and Europe, where they preached, as faſt as they made converts, conſtituted

conſtituted or founded new churches, as at Antioch, Epheſus, Corinth, Rome, and, as ſome ſay, even in Britain.

One thing worthy remark in the conduct of the Apoſtles is, that no one particular Apoſtle claimed a ſuperior right or authority over the whole, to make himſelf ſole lord over God's heritage, but that they directed and governed the Churches in conjunction, or each in their particular place, where he had made converts. There was indeed one ſuperior, one head, which is Chriſt Jeſus; under whom all the churches, though diſtinct in reſpect of place, and perhaps too of forms, were yet in reſpect of their common belief united, and made but one Church, then and to this time called the Church of Chriſt, and the one Catholick and Apoſtolick Church.

The Apoſtles, it is true, were ισοι of equal rank, and the ſame in order, but not ſo their ſucceſſors; for we read in the New Teſtament, that the Apoſtles ordained and cauſed to be ordained, Biſhops and Elders, with other inferiors, called Deacons; as thus in Acts vi. 5. " The whole multitude choſe Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas

and Nicolas; " whom they ſet before the Apoſtles, who, when they had prayed, laid their hands on them"; and in Acts xiv. 23. " They, namely, Paul and Barnabas, ordained Elders in every Church." " For this cauſe, ſays Paul to Titus, i. 5. I left thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every city, as I appointed thee". St. Paul begins his Epiſtle to the Philippians with this addreſs, " Paul and Timotheus to all the ſaints at Philippi, with the Biſhops and Deacons". We read indeed likewiſe of other orders and diſtinctions, as in 1 Cor. xii. 28. " God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that, Miracles, then Gifts of healing, Helps, Governments, diverſities of tongues:" Theſe were miraculous powers, and laſted no longer than the Apoſtolical age. Here then are traces at leaſt of Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons; and though queſtions have ariſen about the title of Prieſt, there being no ſuch order mentioned in the New Teſtament as then ſubſiſting in the Chriſtian Church, as alſo about Elders and Biſhops, whether they differed in degree and

name

name only, being identically the ſame as to order, or were different both in name and order; yet as we read in the primitive writers, that the eaſtern and weſtern churches, planted by the Apoſtles themſelves, were under the miniſtration of Biſhops, Elders (who are alſo called Sacerdotes, Prieſts) and Deacons, the Church of England hath certainly good reaſon on her ſide for following theſe bright and early examples in her doctrines and diſcipline: And though we may not venture to affirm that all things are purely apoſtolical, and that nothing in it might not poſſibly be altered for the better, yet we may, that an attempt to alter might be dangerous, that in it is nothing materially erroneous, and that no good and ſufficient reaſons were ever yet aſſigned, why any may not conform to it, give his unfeigned aſſent and conſent to its offices, creeds and articles, even though as yet he ſhould not perfectly underſtand them, by preſuming and taking it for granted, that others do, and humbly hoping that he himſelf may in time by ſtudy and application. For what is required of him, who is to conform? not ſurely to declare that he has a perfect knowledge of

of all things, or that all things are abſolutely and infallibly perfect, but only that he will live peaceably in the ſociety, and not by writing and preaching, or in any other way oppoſe its ſtatutes and rules, its doctrines and diſcipline. Who can ſay with the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon, that this is wrong? And to be convinced that it is wiſe and wholeſome, we need only to turn our eyes for a moment upon the ſectaries. Not to take any notice of their mode of worſhip, ſee, for want of ſtatutes חקים that is, encloſures and barriers, how they are carried about with every blaſt of vain doctrine; into how many ſects they are divided. How many openly declare themſelves Arians, others Socinians, Deiſts, and ſome even Materialiſts and very Atheiſts? There are no bounds to error; when once an evil heart of unbelief is ſuffered to vagrate, it proceeds eaſily from Arianiſm to Socinianiſm, and from Deiſm to Atheiſm. Indeed they are ſo cloſely linked together in brotherhood, that in or out of company one ſeems juſt as good as the other, allowing that to be true which St. Paul tells the Epheſians ii. 12. that if we are without Chriſt, we are aliens from the common-wealth

mon-wealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, are αθεοι without God in the world.

Now then let us pray for the converſion of our adverſaries, and that Chriſt the head may be with our Church always and in all places; even to the ends of the world, preſenting it unto himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it may be holy and without blemiſh: To him with the Father and Holy Spirit be all honour, might, majeſty and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

NOTES.

Being and form are coeval, p. 41.] Not but there muſt be Being in the abſtract, and that but one; to whom muſt belong thoſe abſtract terms, called his natural attributes, namely, Eternity or duration, (that is, if I may ſo ſpeak, timeleſs, unbeginning and unending) Immenſity, (meaſureleſs) Infinity, (boundleſs) Space, (unconfined by place) and Omnipotency, uncontroulable by power; yet for us to think, to reaſon and ſpeak of this Being and theſe attributes in the pure abſtract, is next to, if not an abſolute, impoſſibility,—metaphyſicks cannot reach it: and that we might be able to behold, admire, adore, worſhip and love this Being, he

he hath been pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf to our ſight by the creation, and to our intellect by language, in words expreſſive of viſible objects, their qualities and operations, and through theſe of himſelf and powers; by inſpiration and in his written word. Accordingly it is ſaid by the Pſalmiſt, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy work"; and by the Apoſtle, "The inviſible things of him, even his eternal Power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen from the creation, being underſtood by the things that are made": Rom. i. 20. And they, who do not diſcern The Being in the creation, the ſame Apoſtle declares "are without excuſe." The author of the book of Wiſdom xiii. 1. likewiſe ſays, "Vain are all natural Philoſophers, who are ignorant of God, and cannot, out of the things that are ſeen, know him that is; nor by conſidering the works acknowledge the work-maſter."

One would think that Ovid had at leaſt a faint idea of the work-maſter, when in his curious deſcription of the creation, Met. i. 73. he calls thoſe heavenly bodies, the ſun, moon and ſtars, not *deos* the gods themſelves, but *formas deorum*, their form and viſible appearance,

Aſtra tenent cæleſte ſolum, formæque deorum.

I cannot help admiring Ovid's deſcription of the chaotic ſtate of things and their creation, that is, ſeparation and form, almoſt equally with that of Moſes, and thinking that he follows not only the order of Moſes, but his very expreſſions. Moſes ſays, "In the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkneſs was upon the face of the deep"; and Ovid, "At firſt, or in the original ſtate of things, the water,

and

and the earth and the air, which was over every thing elſe, or uppermoſt, had one and the ſame appearance over the whole circle of nature":

Ante, mare et tellus, et, quod tegit omnia, cœlum
Unus erat toto naturæ vultus in orbe.

Here Ovid's *ante*, an adverb, plainly anſwers to Moſes בראשית, *tellus* to ארץ, *cœlum* to חשך, *tegit* to על, *vultus* to פני, *mare & orbis* to תהום, a circular, tumultuary, fluid maſs. The other part of Ovid's deſcription to line 20, is nothing more than a poetick variation, in the way of negation, upon the *orbis*, or circular fluid maſs; that it was *rudis indigeſtaque moles*, called chaos, (ſo Heſiod calls it Ητοι μεν πρωτιστα χαος γενετ') a rude, ſhapeleſs heap of matter, without ſun, moon, ſolid ground, navigable ſea, the air void of light, *lucis egens aer*; nothing having its proper form, *nulli ſua forma manebat*, and that every thing was at ſtrife and variance. Such is the deſcription by Moſes and Ovid of things in their original ſtate.

Ovid like Moſes, after having deſcribed the chaotick maſs and its diſorder, goes on to the formation, by a Being prior, diſtinct, and ſuperior to matter; *hanc litem*, this contention, ſays he, *Deus & melior natura*, God and meliorating nature, that is, nature diſpoſed by the power of God to bring things into a better ſtate, *diremit* removed by parting off the earthy matter from the celeſtial, and the watry from the earthy, and by ſeparating the pure air from the groſs;

———*cælo terras, & terris abſcidit undas,*
Et liquidum ſpiſſo ſecrevit ab aere cœlum; '

juſt the ſame in ſenſe as Moſes, when he ſays, "God divided the light from the darkneſs, and the waters

which

which were under the firmament from the waters, which were above the firmament—let the waters be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear."

Here again Ovid's *diremit*, *abſcidit*, *ſecrevit* anſwer to בדל and בדל in Moſes: ברא ſignifies to ſeparate one ſubſtance from another, in the moſt minute and diſcriminate manner, by every method of purification and ſecretion, uſed either in ſolids or fluids; but בדל ſignifies merely to divide ſubſtances themſelves, as air from air, water from water, field from field, by drawing a line and ſetting a boundary: ſee Exod. xxvi. 33.

Heſiod in his theogony, line 116, ſays πρωτιςα at firſt χαος εγενετο chaos was made, not ſelf-born, obſerve, not ſelf-originated; and out of chaos was produced Erebus, (that is, ערב evening) and νυξ night; and out of night, Αιθηρ και Ημερη, pure light and day,

Εκ Χαος δ' Ερεβος τε μελαινα τε Νυξ εγενοντο,
Νυκτος δ' αυτ' Αιθηρ τε και Ημερη εξεγενοντο,

Agreeable to Moſes, ("God called the light, day, and the darkneſs called he night; and the evening and the morning were the firſt day") and to the Apoſtle Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "God commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs".

Heſiod you ſee approaches Moſes, but not ſo near as Ovid.

It may be aſked, "How came Ovid by his inſight into the chaotic ſtate of things and their formation?" I would anſwer, "partly by tradition, but moſtly from a ſight of the Septuagint. He himſelf owns the firſt channel of information, *quem dixere*, which they, that

that is, the Greeks and other Easterns, call chaos. That Ovid had seen the LXX may appear evidently from his expressions, *cæco acervo, rudis indigestaque moles: cæco* is an exact translation of *αορατος invisibilis*, and *rudis, indigesta* of *ακατασκυαστος*, Gen. i. 2. Ovid seems also to borrow his *semina rerum* from the LXX. *το σπερμα αυτȣ εν αυτω*, v. 11. but with too general and extensive application to all and every part of matter; which Moses confines properly and solely to vegetation. This is likewise the unphilosophical doctrine of Lucretius, when he gives animation and a living principle, a self-originated *seed* to his atoms, and of Virgil, Æn. 6. 730.

Spreading trees served for food and for temples, p. 46.] The original state of man both before and after the fall, is, indeed, very plain and simple, as described by Moses, yet wise, happy and probable, in comparison of it, as described by Lucretius, v. 930. and the other poets; than which nothing ean be more wretched and absurd, " Mankind wandering about like hogs, and feeding upon acorns;

Volgivago vitam tractabant more ferarum,
Glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus:

Having no regard to the common good; without any practice of social duties, and without the use of laws, every man seizing for his own, whatever might be gained by fortune and strength, and in woods gratifying their unbridled desires, either by mutual passion, or by force,

Nec commune bonum poterant spectare, nec ullis
Moribus inter se scibant, nec legibus uti;
Quod cuique obtulerat prædæ, fortuna ferebat,
Sponte sua sibi quisque valere & vivere doctus;

Et Venus in ſylvis jungebat corpora amantum.
Conciliebat enim vel mutua quamque cupido,
Vel violenta viri vis, atque impenſa libido:

Many of them devoured by wild beaſts, and even they who ſaved themſelves by flight, with torn bodies, were eaten up alive by vermin, calling in dreadful accents upon death,

At quos effugium ſervarat, corpore adeſo,
——— horrificis accibant vocibus Orcum,
Donicum eos vita privarunt vermina ſæva.

Such is the ſtate of nature ſo much admired and contended for by opponents of revelation.

In token of that life and righteouſneſs, p. 48.] The author of the book of Judges, vi. 34. may be thought to allude to this tranſaction of God's clothing the human pair, when he ſays, "The ſpirit of the Lord *clothed* Gideon"—for ſo ſpeaks the original, uſing the ſame word as is uſed in Gen. iii. 21. ſee alſo 1 Chron. xviii. 2 Chron. vi. 41. Job xxix. 14. Pſ. cxxxii. 9.

The Apoſtles uſe the ſame figurative ſtile; "Put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt---Rom. xiii. 14. Put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs---Epheſ. iv. 24. Put on charity---Col. iii. 14. Be clothed with humility"---Pet. 1 Ep. v. 5. In the firſt ſtate of nature might be uſed religiouſly the ſkins themſelves, but afterwards, when life began to be refined by art, were invented holy garments or veſtments to be worn by him that ſacrificed; of this kind perhaps was the goodly garment of Eſau, Gen. xxvii. 15. who, as being the elder brother, was moſt likely the prieſt: this, upon Eſau's forfeiture of his birth-right, and thereby the

prieſthood,

prieſthood, Rebekah put upon Jacob, and inveſted him with all the privileges of primogeniture. God ordered Moſes (Exod. xxviii. 2.) to make goodly garments for Aaron, even garments of glory and beauty.

Virgil tells us more than once, that the idolatrous prieſts wore the ſkins of beaſts ſlain in ſacrifice.

——— *huc dona ſacerdos*
Cum tulit & cæſarum ovium ſub nocte ſilenti
Pellibus incubuit ſtratis, ſomnoſque petivit.
Pampineaſque gerunt incinctæ pellibus haſtas.

Æn. vii. 86, 396. ſee alſo viii. 282.

The Druids did the ſame in this iſland, as we are told by Cæſar in his Commentaries.

Adam and Eve, on their fall, exhibited marks, and gave manifeſtations of their inward ſorrow and penitence, all that nature could do, by the external ſigns of joining fig-leaves together, and making themſelves girdles: hence the zone or girdle became the token of modeſty and purity, as unlooſening it did their loſs. Judith, ix. 2. referring to Sichem's raviſhment of Dinah, Gen. xxxiv. 2. ſays, "Strangers looſened the girdle of a maid to defile her." The Apoſtle exhorts the Epheſians, vi. 14. "Stand faſt, having your loins girt about with truth." Iſaiah xi. 5. in his deſcription of the Meſſiah ſays; "Righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins." The garments of Adam and Eve, that is, ſorrow and repentance, though proper and preparatory to receive grace, were yet not ſufficient; therefore the Lord himſelf made coats of ſkins, and cloathed them, that is, he gave them aſſurance of acceptance through the mediation and atonement then

 begun,

begun, and afterwards completed by Jeſus Chriſt; "through whom alone we have peace with God, and the gift of eternal life," Rom. v. 1, 6, 23.

According to the foregoing paſſages, and others that might be produced, out of the Greek and Roman writers, the reality of divine revelation, and that it was once univerſal, in its original ſtate very ſimple and plain, is to be proved even from idolatry itſelf; whoſe falſe worſhip is a *fidus interpres* of the true. For the ſacrifices, rites and ceremonies, repreſentations and ſymbols, nay oftentimes the very language, are the ſame in both, only varied, diſguiſed and enlarged, as circumſtances varied, and times and oppoſition. In reading the claſſics a wiſh hath repeatedly occurred to me, that boys at our great ſchools were taught, as in a glaſs, to view the profane writers with the ſacred; not only their ceremonies, but alſo their figurative ſtyle, and that maſters would agree in extracting out of the Heathen mythology, on every poſſible occaſion, ſome philoſophical, moral ſentiments, even admitting them to be fanciful, for the ſake of correcting thoſe impure ideas, falſe doctrines and evil manners, which are apt to ariſe from taking things and tranſactions in the literal ſenſe, frequently groſs, abſurd and abominable.

Thirteen hundred years, p. 53.] Though the perſon or perſons be not certainly known, by whom Chriſtianity was firſt preached in Britain, nor the time when it here received civil eſtabliſhment, yet that it had before the third century we are aſſured from the circumſtances of three Britiſh Biſhops aſſiſting at the council of Arles, A. D. 314, and ſubſcribing the acts

of

of that council, and afterwards at that of Aminium, 359; which is above 200 years before the arrival of Auſtin, who came from Rome into Britain to convert the Saxons, A. D. 591. See the Library, p. 75. and the Hiſt. of the Ch. of Great-Britain, p. 6.

Divine inſtitution, p. 54.] The Preſbyterians wanted the Houſe of Parliament, 1645, to acknowledge the divine right of preſbytery; and the lower Houſe of Convocation, 1702, lying under the imputation of favouring preſbytery, by their oppoſition to the upper houſe, to take off the cenſure entered in their books, a declaration, acknowledging the order of Biſhops ſuperior to that of preſbyters, and to be a divine, apoſtolical inſtitution. Preſbytery was never heard of, at leaſt in its preſent form, till it was eſtabliſhed in Geneva, under the influence of Calvin, about the year 1541; nor in Scotland till it was preached there by his diſciple John Knox, about the year 1559, and has ſince been by law eſtabliſhed, now called the Kirk of Scotland.

Epiſcopacy, by its early introduction, founded government in this iſland, as it did every where elſe, and not government epiſcopacy; this muſt ever be ſaid to its honour: whereas, in Scotland, preſbytery turned government out of doors, and inſtead of reforming, overſet the conſtitution in church and ſtate. However, as the church and kirk, for the ſake of peace and quietneſs, are ſuffered to diſagree ſomething in doctrine and diſcipline, though, it is to be hoped, nothing in eſſentials, it were to be wiſhed, that as Proteſtants, they would join hand and heart in ſupport of the government under which both are protected,

tected, and in defence of revelation, by warmly and rationally preaching up practical religion and ſound morality, not like ſome among us, as mere philoſophers, but upon the principles and motives of the Chriſtian faith, nor like others, who inſiſt altogether upon election and faith, without explaining and preſſing the neceſſary conjunction of good works.

Biſhops and elders, p. 59.] The very name επισκοπος, an inſpector, overſeer, viſitor or ſuperintendant carries in it the idea of priority; and that the Biſhop was ſuperior to an Elder is evident, from expreſs words of ſcripture, and the teſtimonies of primitive writers.

A Biſhop is by St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. ſtiled a ruler, inveſted with the care of the church of God; which beſpeaks him a ſuperior, and that an Elder was ſubordinate to him appears from the authority which Timothy, who was a Biſhop, had of rebuking him, when St. Paul, Tim. v. 1, 19. directs him to uſe his authority with diſcretion and moderation; "Rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him as a father—and, receive not an accuſation againſt an Elder but before two or three witneſſes." The Elders, indeed, are alſo ſtiled rulers, but that they were of an inferior rank appears plainly, from the reward of double honour to be given them for ruling well, 1 Tim. v. 17. likewiſe are they called επισκοποι, Acts xx. 28. But it ought not, nor can it be hence inferred, that they were all equal, and that one of them was not a ſuperior, properly a Biſhop; as Chriſt himſelf is ſtiled, "The Biſhop of our ſouls," that is, a ſupreme director, guide and governour, that watcheth over his people

people for good. St. Peter, 1 Ep. v. 1. condeſcends to call himſelf an Elder; but ſurely no one will affirm that thoſe Elders, whom he writes to and exhorts, were equal to him in rank and authority; or that thoſe Elders whom St. Paul, Acts xx. 28. ſent for to meet him at Epheſus, whom he ſtiles επισκοποι, *overſeers*, and charges them to feed the church of God, were his equals. When St. Paul writes to Titus, "For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every city," he therein declares himſelf ſuperior to Titus, and Titus to the Elders, whom he ordained ſuch. St. John directs his Revelation to the angels, that is, miniſters of the ſeven churches in Aſia, and was therein their ſuperior, under whatever denomination. St. John is ſaid to have ſurvived all the Apoſtles, as well as the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and to have died Biſhop of Epheſus, certainly the ſuperior in that church, and doubtleſs had a ſucceſſor in the like capacity: for, without diſtinction of rank, there can be no government in the church any more than in the ſtate. To talk of government without ſubordination, and ſubordination in a ſtate of equality, is the height of contradiction and abſurdity. This reaſoning from ſcripture is ſupported by the expreſs authority of primitive writers, as ſet forth in the following extracts from a treatiſe, in two parts, entitled, "An Enquiry into the Conſtitution, Diſcipline, Unity and Worſhip of the primitive Church."

The conſtituent parts or members of any particular church, are in general called, in the New Teſtament

and

and by primitive writers, εκλεκτοι, the elect, κλητοι, the called, σωζομενοι, the ſaved, ηγιασμενοι, the ſanctified, πιστοι, the faithful, and αδελφοι, the brethren; theſe were ſo named in contradiſtinction to thoſe who remained Jews and Pagans; they were, in particular, called the elect or choſen, out or from among the Jews and Heathens, not as ſome moderns apply the word, with great partiality, to the elect or choſen among Chriſtians. In the original uſe of this and the other titles, all who became Chriſtians by a ſeparation of themſelves from the Jews and Heathens, were named the elect, the called, the ſaved, the ſanctified, the faithful, and the brethren. Part 1. page 8.

Theſe conſtituent parts were again divided into the clergy, or eccleſiaſtical perſons, and into laicks, or the laity; theſe together compoſed the church.

The clergy were diſtinguiſhed firſt into Biſhops, (p. 11.) who ſtood ſupreme, under the titles of *Epiſcopus*, *Præpoſitus*, *Gubernator*, *Antiſtes*, *ſummus Sacerdos*; p. 14. Towards the end of the firſt century, the firſt and eldeſt preſbyter at Rome, as in other churches, bore this title.

The place over which the Biſhop preſided was at firſt called, not ſee or dioceſs, but παροικια, pariſh, that is, a place where a competent number of people dwelt near each other, p. 16.

The Biſhop read prayers, preached, and adminiſtered the ſacrament at the altar, with others under him, named, ſecondly, πρεσβυτεροι; who might alſo do the ſame, but not without his leave, conſent and appointment,

appointment, and thirdly by others, called Διακονοι, p. 18, 19, 20, 55. This proves the ſuperiority of the Biſhop, and inferiority of the preſbyters, or prieſts and deacons.

The ſacrament of baptiſm was alſo generally adminiſtered by the Biſhop, p. 21.

The preſbyters, though different in degree, were yet of the ſame ſpecific order, (p. 58.) and compoſed the executive part; (p. 59.) they could, with the Biſhop's conſent, even confirm, (p. 60.) and ordain, p. 62. Hence, with us, the junction of the prieſt's hands with the Biſhop's in ordination.

The Biſhops and preſbyters were ηγεμενοι or προηγεμενοι, the governours of the ſeveral churches, p. 65.

Theſe church officers are expreſsly named firſt by Ignatius, who lived in the beginning of the ſecond century, applying the title of Biſhop to him who was the more immediate governour of a pariſh, and that of preſbyter, elder or prieſt, to him who had no particular care or inſpection of a pariſh, but under the Biſhop: this diſtinction is followed by ſucceeding writers, p. 66 and 78.

Properly ſpeaking there were, and are now with us, but two orders, that of Biſhops, and that of Deacons; Biſhop and preſbyter, or prieſt, being identically the ſame as to order, differing in degree and power only, p. 68.

Biſhops were honoured with the firſt ſeat, had the precedency, and the preſbyters with the ſecond, p. 73.

The Biſhops and preſbyters preſided and governed; the Deacons attended, aſſiſted and obeyed, p. 73, 4.

Thus I have ſelected a few plain matters of fact, without giving the ſtatutes at large, in reſpect to popery, the church of England, the ſectaries and infidelity, and now leave the reader to make his own reflections and concluſions; to his own maſter every one ſtandeth or falleth.

FINIS.